

**CALENDAR ITEM  
C64**

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PRC 3312.1  
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**GENERAL LEASE – RECREATIONAL USE**

**APPLICANT:**

Anthony J. Sotelo, or his successor Trustee, Trustee of the Anthony J. Sotelo Family Trust dated June 15, 2011

**PROPOSED LEASE:**

*AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:*

Sovereign land in the Midway Channel of Huntington Harbour, adjacent to 3392 Gilbert Drive, city of Huntington Beach, Orange County.

*AUTHORIZED USE:*

Continued use and maintenance of an existing boat dock and access ramp.

*LEASE TERM:*

10 years, beginning August 1, 2017.

*CONSIDERATION:*

Annual rent in the amount of \$617 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

*SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:*

Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

**STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:**

**Authority:**

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6501.1, and 6503.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2000, subdivision (b).

**Public Trust and State's Best Interests Analysis:**

On March 25, 2008, the Commission authorized the issuance of Lease No. PRC 3312.9, a Recreational Pier Lease, to Anthony J. Sotelo, for the continued use and maintenance of a boat dock and access ramp, for a

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term of 10 years beginning August 1, 2007 ([Calendar Item C05, March 25, 2008](#)). On June 15, 2011, the property was transferred to the Applicant. The current lease will expire on July 31, 2017. The Applicant is now applying for a new lease.

Recreational boating is water-dependent and is generally consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine. The California Legislature has identified private recreational boating facilities as an authorized use of Public Trust lands (Pub. Resources Code, § 6503.5). The subject facilities, consisting of a boat dock and access ramp, are privately owned and maintained and located within the Midway Channel. The boat dock and access ramp facilitate recreational boating because they are used for the docking and mooring of recreational boats.

The Midway Channel in Huntington Harbour was created in the early 1960s and the adjacent upland parcel is privately owned and developed with a residence. There is no public access at this upland property because the private upland property directly abuts the concrete bulkhead that defines the limits of the channel. The boat dock extends to the pierhead line that is 30 feet into the 200-foot-wide channel leaving the majority of the Midway Channel available for navigation and public recreation.

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 10-year term and does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises. Upon termination of the lease, the lessee may be required to remove all improvements from State land. Additionally, the proposed lease requires the lessee to insure the lease premises and indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon. The lease also requires the payment of annual rent to compensate the people of the State for the use of public land.

**Climate Change:**

Climate change impacts, including sea-level rise, are not limited to the open coast and may involve increased wave activity, storm events, and flooding. The existing structures subject to the proposed lease are located within the Huntington Harbour development, along an inland, navigable, tidally-influenced channel, and may be vulnerable to the impacts of sea-level rise. The lease area contains a fixed floating boat dock and an adjustable access ramp. Huntington Harbour is built near sea-level elevation, and as a result is vulnerable to flooding and storm surge events. Huntington Harbour is adjacent to two wetlands, Bolsa Chica and the Seal

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Beach National Wildlife Refuge, which could act as natural buffers to storm surges and lessen flood risks. Compared to year 2000 levels, the region could see up to 1 foot of sea-level rise by the year 2030, 2 feet by 2050, and possibly over 5 feet by 2100 (National Research Council 2012). As stated in *Safeguarding California* (California Natural Resources Agency 2014), climate change is projected to increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters related to flooding, drought, and storms (especially when coupled with sea-level rise).

The combination of these conditions will likely result in increased wave run up, storm surge, and flooding in coastal and near coastal areas. In rivers and tidally-influenced waterways, more frequent and powerful storms can result in increased flooding conditions and damage from storm-created debris. Climate change and sea-level rise will further influence coastal and riverine areas by changing erosion and sedimentation rates. Beaches, coastal landscapes, and near-coastal riverine areas will be exposed to increased wave force and run up, potentially resulting in greater beach or bank erosion than previously experienced.

This increase in sea level combined with more frequent and stronger storm events will likely expose the lease area structures to higher flood risks, comprised of greater total water levels for longer periods of time. Flooding conditions could cause structures to be damaged or dislodged, presenting hazards to public safety as well as dangers for navigation within the channel. The floating nature of the boat dock and adjustable access ramp will allow it to rise and fall with tides and waves, increasing their resiliency to some sea-level rise impacts. The fixed features like the pilings may need to be raised or reinforced to withstand future conditions; although the bulkhead underneath the deck is not under the Commission's jurisdiction, any sea-level rise impacts to the bulkhead could also affect the structures under the Commission's jurisdiction because it serves to stabilize the bank. Therefore, any loss or degradation of the bulkhead would result in property damage and public safety concerns within the lease area and the surrounding waterways.

More locally-based knowledge of sea-level rise impacts and adaptation strategies will be available to Huntington Harbour residents as a result of the ongoing efforts to update the City of Huntington Beach's Local Coastal Program and General Plan, and through the city's Coastal Resiliency Task Force. Regular maintenance, as required by the terms of the lease, will reduce the likelihood of severe structural degradation or dislodgement. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Applicant acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland are located in

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an area that may be subject to the effects of climate change, including sea-level rise.

**Conclusion:**

For all the reasons above, Commission staff believes the issuance of this lease is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine, will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the proposed lease, and is in the best interests of the State.

**OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:**

1. Applicant owns the upland adjoining the lease premises.
2. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.1 of the Commission's Strategic Plan to deliver the highest levels of public health and safety in the protection, preservation, and responsible economic use of the lands and resources under the Commission's jurisdiction.
3. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15300 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

4. This activity involves lands identified as possessing significant environmental values pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq., but such activity will not affect those significant lands. Based upon staff's consultation with the persons nominating such lands and through the CEQA review process, it is staff's opinion that the project, as proposed, is consistent with its use classification.

**EXHIBITS:**

- A. Land Description
- B. Site and Location Map

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

It is recommended that the Commission:

**CEQA FINDING:**

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

**PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:**

Find that the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location at this time, is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine, and is in the best interests of the State.

**SIGNIFICANT LANDS INVENTORY FINDING:**

Find that this activity is consistent with the use classification designated by the Commission for the land pursuant to Public Resources Code section 6370 et seq.

**AUTHORIZATION:**

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning August 1, 2017, for a term of 10 years, for the use and maintenance of an existing boat dock and access ramp as described in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B (for reference purposes only) attached and by this reference made a part hereof; annual rent in the amount of \$617, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

**LAND DESCRIPTION**

A parcel of submerged land in Huntington Harbour, in the City of Huntington Beach, Orange County, California, described as follows:

BEGINNING at the most easterly corner of Lot 16, as said lot is shown and so designated on that certain map of Tract No.4677 filed in Book 168, Pages 14 through 18 of Miscellaneous Maps, Official Records of said County; thence along the southeasterly extension of the northeasterly line of said lot 30.00 feet; thence southwesterly along a line parallel to the southeasterly line of said lot 55.00 feet; thence northwesterly along the southeasterly extension of southwesterly line of said lot 30.00 feet to the most southerly corner of said lot to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

**END OF DESCRIPTION**

Prepared 02/23/2017 by the California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit



